

INTERVIEW ISSUE

In this special edition of the 50 by 25 newsletter, we're taking this opportunity to sit down with some of DOOR's directors to learn what's happening in their departments. Follow the links on page 8 for the full interviews in English and American Sign Language.



INTERVIEW WITH: **Rob Myers** *President and CEO of DOOR International*

Please quickly introduce yourself!

Hello! My name is Rob Myers. I am hearing, and I've been with DOOR since I joined in 2014. I work in the capacity of president and CEO of DOOR International.

Tell us a bit about the function of your role.

I view my job not as being at the top of the pyramid, but instead, I am at the bottom of an inverted pyramid. Essentially, my role is to support and serve. Likewise, the leaders I serve have the role of serving their employees. Their employees aren't their servants, but rather the people they are putting first.

Just like how Jesus said, "But the greatest among you shall be your servant." We at DOOR seek to incorporate this concept through service.

Before discussing the 50 by 25 goal, do you mind sharing one highlight from 2020?

Yes, we had a campaign called 30 for 30. It started when our staff on the field in Asia noticed the pandemic was putting many Deaf people, often manual laborers, out of work. Many Deaf families

ran out of money and food, and started asking our staff for help, specifically, our 2-by-2 teams. The 2-by-2 staff started giving out of their own pockets. When they shared this with us, we realized that this was a need. There was potential for other people to become involved. We asked how much it would cost to feed one Deaf family for 30 days. They replied, "30 dollars." The field workers were excited about the opportunity to share the gospel with previously resistant groups along with the food.

We are so thankful for all the people who heard the need and gave to support that. DOOR has noticed several things as a result of this pandemic. Tell us about that.

We use the phrase "double isolation" for the Deaf community. They are isolated at home along with being isolated from their families by communication barriers. That experience is so incredibly hard, especially for Deaf children. A lot of our 2-by-2 staff are passionate about reaching Deaf children but were prevented by the pandemic.

The second thing we've noticed is that this pandemic has affected relationships. Here in the United States we value relationships, but in the southern parts of the world they place a heavier emphasis on building relationships. Deaf communities value in-person interactions. Usually when we start a new project we would visit the Deaf leaders in-person and then set up a committee to recruit translators or 2-by-2 leaders. It's harder when we meet via Zoom because they don't really get to know us.

What are some of DOOR's plans going forward?

DOOR needs to focus more on creating resources for teams starting translation work and for churches (and other organizations) who want to start 2-by-2 programs. They can benefit from our experience and start their ministries more quickly. I am excited to say that this has been ongoing throughout 2020 and is continuing in 2021. One example is our partnership with Deaf Harbor to develop translation resources which we hope will be released in 2022. It's inspiring to see how other ministries are impacted by DOOR's years of experience.

Could you introduce the 50 by 25 goal?

We work in Bible translation and church planting. DOOR's vision is to transform every Deaf person's life through knowing, following, and serving God. Our mission is to bring God's Word in sign language and provide Christian fellowship to the Deaf worldwide.

We want to see these two areas support and build on each other. We know that eventually, maybe twenty or twenty-five years in the future, DOOR won't be working in a specific country. Our intent should be to work ourselves out of a job. We want the local believers to take ministry into their own



Only 23% of the Deaf worldwide have access to some translated Scripture and a Deaf-led church planting movement in their people group.

hands. We know we're no longer needed when local communities have a Bible translation, have received training in evangelism and church planting, and have local Deaf leaders.

When we originally started thinking about this twofold goal, roughly 9 percent of the Deaf worldwide had access to both translated Scripture and a Deaf-led church planting movement.

This past March, I reported this to DOOR's board: We started with 9 percent, and that number has grown to 23 percent. We're hoping to achieve 50 percent by 2025. This goal is not solely dependent on DOOR work. We are also counting communities that our partners are working in. If they have a translation, we can use that in training local leaders. Or if they have a church planting program ready, but are lacking a translation, we can help with that.

We've noticed that there are around 35 sign languages used by around 50 percent of the Deaf worldwide. So making an impact in these languages would impact half of the Deaf in the world. Our hope is that these Deaf would multiply the impact themselves in other people groups.

Do you have anything you'd like to share in addition to the above?

My initial training was in mathematics. I love numbers. I have a PhD in math! All of this information talking about percentages and the number of Deaf...fits me to a T. However, I recognize that behind every number is a person. In this 50 by 25 newsletter, maybe you will read about many different numbers and statistics, but remember this: behind every number there is a person. This person didn't have any opportunities to access the Gospel. And now, through your partnership, your prayers, your support and through all the faithful workers at DOOR and our partners, many communities finally have access to the Gospel for the first time. On behalf of our staff, I want to thank each one of you for standing with us in prayer and support throughout the rough years of 2020 and 2021. Your prayers and your faithfulness have really impacted all of our staff and the communities we serve.

DOOR is currently serving the Deaf in the following ways:



FOUNDED IN
1983



Approximately

1000
DEAF CHURCHES
PLANTED



Partnered
in over

20
SIGN LANGUAGE
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE
TRANSLATIONS



Approximately

230 STAFF
85%
ARE DEAF



Approximately

3000
LEADERS TRAINED

Over
40
2-BY-2 TEAMS



Serving in
15
COUNTRIES





Sign Language Translation



INTERVIEW WITH: Mark Sorenson
International Translation Director

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do for DOOR.

Hello. My name is Mark Sorenson. I work for DOOR International in the capacity of International Translation Director. My position entails overseeing all DOOR sign language translation projects on a worldwide basis. I oversee every aspect of the process from establishing translation committees and partnerships, recruiting the translation teams, to administrative support such as budgeting and training so that the teams will be able to translate God's Word into their heart language.

How many sign language translation projects is DOOR currently involved in?

Currently, DOOR is involved in 8 different sign language translation projects, plus a translation resources development project.

Tell us how the tough year of 2020 has affected your department in unexpected ways.

Indeed, 2020 was a year! We typically have a lot of in-person team meetings but the coronavirus has isolated the teams. We've had less in-person sessions and moved our meetings to Zoom. I have to thank God for technology making this possible, and we've seen more countries improve the speed of their internet access. If this had happened five or ten years ago, the quality of internet access would

have made communicating with other countries impossible. But now, some places have access to good internet, making it easier for us to meet via Zoom with the teams and the consultants.

Also, the teams were able to work together in their own personal quarantine bubbles. Some of our teams had a rotating schedule where only two people were in the office at a time.

There was a big milestone near the end of last year on the ASL project. Can you elaborate?

Yes, our partners at Deaf Harbor successfully completed their work on 119 Bible passages in the Chronological Bible Translation (CBT)! In 2020 they worked overtime to film, refilm, edit, and put together all the passages. They got all 119 published on the internet and so many Deaf people have told us they immensely enjoyed watching them. Many churches use the passages in their services, and it's great seeing that!

This milestone is important in more ways than one, so could you expand a little more on why that is?

Yes, it's interesting because we're seeing more and more countries become familiar with ASL. For instance, if someone from Russia was connected with someone in France, and if the former didn't know French Sign Language or the latter Russian Sign Language, they will use ASL.



I attended a Deaf conference in 2000 while I was living in Europe. They had nine sign language interpreters up front interpreting the speakers' messages into different sign languages. I went to another conference in 2004 and they had 6 interpreters. I went to Estonia two years ago and the conference only had 2 interpreters up front! The presenters were primarily using ASL. Times certainly have changed. Now when I visit other countries more than half of the Deaf community are familiar with ASL.

The reason behind this increasing familiarity is social media. Most of the world's Deaf people are hungry for information in sign language. Most pieces of information found on the internet are in ASL. English is the business language of the world, and ASL is the business language of the Deaf world. I want to clarify: their heart language is still their local language, not ASL, but it is useful for cross-cultural communication.

The coronavirus has definitely affected DOOR in a couple of key ways in 2020. What were some of the challenges translation teams faced?

The number one challenge was with community checks. The checks require people to gather and watch the translated videos. Our teams tried doing the checks via Zoom but Deaf people greatly prefer in-person interactions. The pandemic also prevented our consultants from spending time with the teams. We again turned to Zoom but it's not ideal.

Looking ahead, tell us about what you plan to do in 2021.

In 2021, we are working on forming partnerships with several countries. Our survey teams find out background information about the countries to help us make informed decisions about recruiting, partnerships, and whether a country needs a Bible translation or a 2-by-2 ministry. The pandemic put all that on hold. Hopefully soon we'll be able to survey several countries, and then recruit four new translation teams by next year.

Do you anticipate any challenges to your plans for 2021?

We're trying to recruit a team from Kai. The funding is ready and we're waiting for a team to start working on the translation at the end of June. We need several days to recruit effectively but the pandemic prevents us from visiting the country. My team made videos of the assigned story for



the recruits to practice signing. Then they'll record themselves so we can evaluate and continue the interviews via Zoom.

Do you mind telling us about the 50 by 25 goal and how translation ties into that?

That is DOOR's goal: to have 50 percent of the Deaf worldwide be able to have access to God's Word and Deaf-led churches by the year 2025. We have a list of countries with Deaf population sizes to guide us in selecting the ones with the largest number of Deaf people to reach in order to reach the goal of having 50% of the world's Deaf population access these two things.

Do you have anything you want to share with us that we may not realize is happening?

I've been working with DOOR for twenty-two years and it's amazing to see how times have changed. Technology makes so many things more accessible to the Deaf. When we began doing translation work many Deaf communities were resistant. In the beginning many of us only had VHS tapes. But today, with the help of social media, more Deaf

Our partners at Deaf Harbor successfully completed their work on 119 Bible passages in the Chronological Bible Translation (CBT).

have access to God's Word in sign language. Now the challenge is our capacity. So many countries reach out for a sign language translation. The world is eager for Bible translations in sign language, but we don't have enough consultants. Please pray for more consultants.

What kind of impact have you seen happen as a result of the translation department's work?

Many Deaf people shared that their favorite translated passage is about the seven churches from the Book of Revelation. They've pestered our partner Deaf Harbor to translate the remaining chapters of Revelation, but it's one of the most complicated and difficult books to translate. Sign language makes it come alive for them. They definitely want more.



DOOR plans to draw on our history of training 2-by-2 teams and develop a program/curriculum to be taught in our Nehemiah School of Leadership.

2-by-2 Ministry

INTERVIEW WITH: Manuel*
International 2-by-2 Director

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do for DOOR.

Hello. I'm Manuel. I was born in Costa Rica and have lived here for most of my life. I am the International 2-by-2 Director for DOOR. I provide training to empower Deaf leaders and missionaries.

Church planting and evangelism are major areas of need among the Deaf communities of the world. Where did the concept for 2-by-2 come from?

In Luke 10, Jesus sent out seventy leaders ahead of him in teams of two. They traveled to different towns to tell others about Him. DOOR adopted this concept and we send out teams of two.



Could you tell us about some of the successes your department had in 2020 despite the challenging pandemic?

Before the pandemic, the 2-by-2 teams could only do their work in-person. When coronavirus hit, the teams had to stay home and do most of their work on Zoom. Usually the teams in Africa found it difficult to reach the Deaf people who were often working. But the pandemic left many Deaf people unemployed, giving our teams more opportunities to evangelize.

Before 2020 we obtained 2-by-2 reports either quarterly or biannually. During the pandemic we came up with a reporting system that lets teams

make updates from their phones in real-time. Now we get daily updates on decisions to accept Christ, baptisms, and testimonies.

In the past, our teams had a single approach to 2-by-2 work. During the pandemic our leaders developed four different approaches to best suit a region's needs.

What challenges did your teams face in 2020?

Evangelism and 2-by-2 work are dependent on meeting people in-person. The coronavirus made that impossible. It also prevented leaders from visiting the field.

Tell me about the future plans for the 2-by-2 ministry?

We're recruiting teams from South Africa and Kai. In September, the reporting staff who work to transcribe different sign language videos into English, will meet with the 2-by-2 leaders, IT staff and the advancement team. This group will work to further improve our reporting process.

The 50 by 25 goal is an important one for DOOR. How does your work tie into that goal?

The 50 by 25 goal combines two important components: Bible translation and 2-by-2 teams. Bible translation alone can't accomplish this goal. Similarly, the 2-by-2 teams can't do their work without an available Bible translation. Both are equally important to our goal of reaching 50 percent of the Deaf worldwide by the year 2025.

What are some components or things you oversee as part of your role that we may not realize falls under the umbrella of 2-by-2?

I oversee three different things: the 2-by-2 ministry, a project called 2-by-2 resource development, and the Nehemiah School of Leadership.

The 2-by-2 resource development project supports and trains teams to plant churches and bring people to Christ. Its leaders face many questions about baptism, the Lord's Supper, and various church doctrines. The leaders are trained to teach CBT but they don't have the answers to these questions. DOOR plans to develop resources that prepare 2-by-2 teams to dive into deeper topics.

The Nehemiah School of Leadership is still in the planning stage. There isn't a course of study for the Deaf to become missionaries or pastors. DOOR plans to draw on our history of training 2-by-2 teams and apply them to the new school.

Do you have any testimonies or stories you've come across during your ministry that you'd like to share?

The teams were going to a Deaf school in Tanzania to teach the kids Bible stories. One Deaf girl was very interested in the stories and was eventually saved. The girl didn't tell her father because he was a devout Muslim. Eventually he learned of her conversion and was so enraged that he kicked her out of the house. The Deaf church provided the girl with housing and meals.

The young woman became ill and was taken to a hospital. The church and 2-by-2 teams continued to take care of her by providing meals and funds. Her family said that she was being punished because of her conversion to Christianity. After her recovery the woman's father also became sick. His family didn't come to visit him. They believed he was being punished for his daughter's rejection of the Muslim faith.

The Deaf woman heard her father was in the hospital and started visiting him. The church helped supply meals and money to pay for his medical bills. Her father was struck by the contrast between this Deaf church and his own family. He started weeping and accepted Christ. Once he returned home, his daughter came to live with him again.

**Face covered and name changed for security purposes.*



Tell us your name, your position with DOOR, and tell us about consulting.

My name is Shadrack. I work for DOOR International as the director of consulting services. I live in Kenya.

A consultant is someone who works closely with translation projects and teams. They support, encourage, train, and teach the teams. They also approve translated Scripture.

This process of approving the translation is really important, right?

Yes, when an approval goes through it means the translation's accuracy is equivalent to a written translation.

How has the year 2020 and the pandemic affected your work?

The coronavirus made a massive impact on our work but God helped us through it. COVID-19 prevented the consultants from visiting the teams. We turned to Zoom when we couldn't travel. That brought us another challenge—certain areas have poor internet connectivity.

Not only that, but you have to adjust for time differences, right?

Right, yes, sometimes I would need to work late into the evening while the people I met with were up early in the morning.

Tell me a little bit about how that affects your work with the community and community checks.

Usually the team will go out and do community checks in-person. COVID-19, again, prevented all of that. We had to turn to alternatives such as Zoom, with each community in their individual boxes on screen trying to provide feedback. It is nowhere near a perfect solution, but we made it work.

This pandemic has impacted multiple areas in everyone's lives and work. How has God showed up for you and your department through this time?

God kept surprising us and moving in mighty ways. DOOR kept supporting their many translation projects via video conferencing and kept approving passages. We worked on a total of 17 languages this year. I am so thankful for that.

Why does DOOR provide consulting services for other organizations?

DOOR is the leading provider of consultants for sign language translation projects worldwide. DOOR has shown their commitment to Deaf ministry and to following God's call to develop resources for sign language translation.

What are some of the things you anticipate happening in 2021?

Our highest priority is working with teams to approve passages. We have seven new recruits coming in to be trained. We have a consultant-in-training who is close to becoming a full consultant. We look forward to giving him his certification.

We are also planning for 2022. We want to set up a training program that allows more Deaf people to become consultants. We are in the process of building the foundation, working out all the specifics, and thinking of potential recruits for that new program.

CEDAR is the name given to this new program. Tell us a bit about that.

Yes, in the past, DOOR has trained both Deaf and hearing consultants, but we want to clean up the entire program and make it more efficient. CEDAR is an acronym for Consultant Empowerment, Development, and Resourcing. The goal of the program is to empower more Deaf people to attain consultant certification.

How does your work as the director of consulting services help further the bigger goal of 50 by 25 that DOOR is working to attain?

Consulting affects the translation side of things. Most translation projects lack consultants who can approve their work. We are trying to solve this scarcity to give the Deaf greater access to God's Word.

So are you saying that if consultants didn't exist, we wouldn't be able to attain the 50 by 25 goal?

That's exactly it. Without consultants, Bible translation is impossible. Many organizations realize that their biggest need is for consulting, and DOOR feels that as well. That's why we're working hard to train more consultants.

What are some things that are necessary for consultants to know?

A consultant needs to be trained in Biblical knowledge, linguistics, cross-cultural work, and Bible history. When a translation is approved it accurately reflects the meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek.



DOOR is following God's call — to develop resources for sign language translation.



Support Services

INTERVIEW WITH: Dan
Director of Support Services



What's your name and position with DOOR?

My name is Dan. I'm married to my wife Sarah, and we have a son, Ezra. Currently, we live in Western New York, midway between Buffalo and Rochester. We've lived here several years but travel a lot. I started working for DOOR around four or five years ago.

My position with DOOR is Director of Support Services. It's the foundation that supports many other DOOR services. Our department manages all of DOOR's technical support and researches new technical systems to better support translation projects.

We also have language surveys where we visit different countries prior to establishing DOOR translation projects. We try to gather information about the local Deaf communities that help facilitate the process of setting up a translation project. The process involves a lot of logistical planning, linguistic tools, research, and technical writing.

Communicating with partners about DOOR's work is the last area that falls under support services.

How has the pandemic affected your work?

Language surveying includes traveling to the country, meeting with Deaf people in different towns, and then traveling home. Normally, a survey would take around a month. The team visits four to ten different regions and meets more than three hundred people. In 2020, survey work was put on hold since it endangered our teams and the local Deaf.

Survey research didn't stop. We used the year to prepare internal reports for publication. We also submitted our first survey report to a SIL journal. It'll be the first DOOR article published in a research journal.

I know you're working on a lot of different things right now, so tell me about one of the biggest achievements in 2020.

Other than the new 2-by-2 reporting system, we focused on a platform for our translations. We set up a page on the DOOR website to upload our own. Currently we have three different translations available on our website and YouTube channel. YouTube is valuable because Deaf people all over the world are familiar with it. It's the easiest place to find content in their own sign languages.

Do you mind sharing a bit about your plans for 2021 and beyond?

Our hope is that the survey teams will be able to travel again. DOOR has the 50 by 25 goal to attain, but survey work needs to happen before we can make steps toward that goal. Another big plan for 2021 is setting up a Scripture distribution department. Previously DOOR has depended on partnerships for Scripture distribution but now we feel that we can start doing this ourselves. We plan to hire two people to focus on Scripture distribution full-time. The job entails uploading content to YouTube and our website. Hopefully, we'll soon upload content to YouVersion and Bible Gateway as well. This department will also distribute physical materials like micro SD cards and USBs. We're also working with partners to further improve Scripture distribution.

Is there anything that you could share to help us gain a better understanding of Support Services and its role within DOOR?

Think of the department as a bridge. The cars crossing the bridge are the other departments (consulting, translation, and 2-by-2). They're how we serve the community. If they don't have a bridge to drive on then they end up in the water. A translation team can't do their work without cameras, lights,

or editing tools. They similarly can't work before we conduct a language survey. We constantly survey the whole organization to find weaknesses and fill gaps.

DOOR conducts language surveys by visiting different countries prior to establishing DOOR translation projects.



Full interviews in ASL & English can be found at:



INTERVIEW WITH:

Rob Myers *President and CEO of DOOR International*
DOORInternational.org/president-interview



INTERVIEW WITH:

Mark Sorenson *International Translation Director*
DOORInternational.org/translation-interview



INTERVIEW WITH:

Dan *Director of Support Services*
DOORInternational.org/support-services-interview



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