

James and Joy Campbell Deaf Bible & Ministry Instructor



Email: campbell@ipmworld.org
Texting: 443.257.2005
Home Video Phone: 240.292.6745


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Greetings to all prayer warriors and supporters,

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"Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless." Psalms 10:14

"Tu regardes cependant, car tu vois la peine et la souffrance, Pour prendre en main leur cause; C'est à toi que s'abandonne le malheureux, C'est toi qui viens en aide à l'orphelin." Psalms 10:14

Andrew Foster (1925-1987) was a deaf missionary who went to Africa in 1957. There he encountered cultures that were so oppressive to deaf people that parents often hid their deaf children at home or abandoned them altogether. Hearing missionaries told Foster that deaf children didn't even exist in Africa; but, Foster found many deaf children and established 32 schools for them. He convinced school officials to let him use their classrooms after hours to teach the deaf. Before he finished, he had established schools in Benin, Congo, Chad, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Togo, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Cameroon.



Foster taught sign language to many Africans which allowed them to fulfill his favorite Bible verse, Isaiah 29:18: *"And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book..."*. As the deaf began to become literate, he would supplement their education with trade skills and the gospel. He also convinced existing churches and missions to expand their ministry to include the Deaf. Although He was dedicated and tireless, Andrew Foster's life was cut short in a plane crash in Rwanda on his way to Kenya.

God's work did not end with Andrew Foster's death. Brother Foster's life placed a burden on Pastor Kevin Maki and myself to go to Ivory Coast to train and share with His people. Brother Maki has been to Ghana twice and I have been to Kenya twice. God's work for Africa will never end until "the last trump sounds."

Brother Maki and I visited the former Christian School for Deaf Ivorians at Abidjan, Ivory Coast (started by Foster in 1972). After his death, the school was taken over by the government and is now known as Ivorian School for the Deaf. The government has forbidden the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared on school property; but, because it was summer break, the school officials allowed us to share the gospel with the deaf students. Our great Lord has always opened doors for us, there is no stoppage! Brother Maki and I shared the gospel with approximately 50 deaf young adults for an hour. We give all the praise and glory to our great God for bringing seven souls into His kingdom. Yes, seven souls made the decision to put their trust in Jesus, and local pastors are now following up with them. It could have been a challenge to communicate - since we don't speak French. But, they understood our American Sign Language because Foster brought our sign language to Ivory Coast. Many of them couldn't read or write so we used pictures and video to deliver the gospel.



The Lord has placed a huge burden on my heart and so I decided to share with national Pastor Andre Nao the importance of starting a deaf school and a deaf Bible institute at his church. The Ivory Coast has 20 million residents and the government is only able to educate 310 deaf students each year. Many deaf folk are illiterate, so how can they understand the gospel if they cannot read? I explained to Pastor Nao that I spent 12 years as a Bible college professor in Maryland where several Africans with student visas came to study and all of the students, except one, ended up staying in the USA. One returned to Tanzania and planted a deaf church there. To remedy this problem, we need a deaf Bible institute in Africa instead of all deaf Africans coming to the USA. Our goal is to train students to fulfill the Great Commission, not satisfy their flesh by staying in the USA.

Brother Maki and I provided two full days of training to pastors and church leaders on Deaf culture, biblical word signs and various teaching methods to reach both illiterate/literate deaf. This training corrected the erroneous mindsets about the deaf and reduced the misunderstandings between cultures. We displayed some hand signs for the biblical words that are not found in many sign language books. We also gave them examples how to teach by using tools, and picture materials. As we learned in the book of Mark chapter 7, Jesus made time for the deaf man and took him aside from the multitudes. Jesus communicated with His hands and healed him. I encouraged them to set time aside for the deaf ministry. They found it very rewarding and beneficial. Their desire to work with the deaf became evident because their faces said it all.



After the leadership training and deaf school evangelism, we traveled five hours to the camp and stayed there for five days. I thanked God for His protection over the campers and us as we arrived safely at camp. The roads are in very poor condition, and we passed two police check points. Three times each day, deaf campers experienced preaching about salvation, pious life, and righteous characters. Bible trivia and soccer games were held, and they also sang many songs. One day, the deaf campers and staff went to the nearest town for evangelism and distributed tracts to as many passersby as possible, and two hearing residents got saved. Yes, deaf folks can share the gospel with hearing folks. God made beautiful feet and hands, and they passed out tracts without making a sound. With God, nothing is impossible. I learned that 90% of the deaf in the photo above grew up as orphans. It was an eye opener for me as I learned that many parents abandoned them after dropping them at the school or kicking them out in the street. They had to fend for themselves. I met Pastor Ake who took 14 deaf orphans into his home and a deacon, Leonce who took five deaf orphans in as well. Pastor Nao housed five deaf orphans at the church even though he has not constructed a dormitory. I inquired about other deaf orphans who are living on the street and was told that there is nothing they can do.



I met Namon Ouattara, a deaf male orphan from a Muslim background, who has been living with Deacon Leonce for three years. He is estimated to be eight years old. He knew very few signs and didn't know the language. He spent his camping days glued to my side. He tugged on my heartstrings so much and I was heartbroken that his parents thought that Namon was useless and abandoned him. Becoming an adoptive father isn't in my life plan, but the Lord touched my heart about Namon and I knew that I needed to do whatever it takes to give him the life he deserves. I contacted my wife during the camp and asked her about adopting him. She happily agreed because she is also adopted. I am trusting the Lord to make this happen as He brought Namon into my life. Please pray for this adoption process to go smooth and without many difficulties. God has great plans for Namon in the future.



National Pastor Nao asked me to preach in his church. I was very nervous because of the large hearing audience with American Sign Language and French translations going on. Brother Maki, who usually interpreted for me, was preaching at another church. But God made everything flow flawlessly. This church has approximately 250 hearing attendees along with 40 deaf attendees. I encouraged the church to expand their deaf ministry and take care of deaf orphans. I was told that there were many "Amen's" but I couldn't hear them due to my deafness. I was blessed by their hospitality, humility, and love. After my preaching, Pastor Nao announced that in a few years he would like to start a deaf school, a deaf Bible institute, and a dormitory. The church gave its support. I'm excited to see what plans God has for this church's deaf ministry in the coming years and I will follow up with this church next year.

Thank you for your precious prayers and financial support for me while I went to the Ivory Coast last month (and to France this month). I thank God that in His mercy he saved many souls, helped many hurting and confused Christians, and encouraged hearing churches to work with Deaf.

I would like to close this prayer letter with these verses. *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."* 2 Corinthians 1:3&4

Blessings,

James & Joy Campbell

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