

Welcome to the 'Deaf World'



Plus special succinct package on

'DEAF AWARENESS'

and

'MINISTRY TO THE DEAF'

Welcome to the Deaf World

We value you, the reader. We trust that you will read this succinct brochure thereby gaining a greater understanding of the Deaf Christian Community in South Africa since its inception and that you may be encouraged to work more closely with them.

Our prayer is that you will invite God to have His will in your life.

A History on the Deaf Christian Community

Let us look back at how God has been working among the Deaf Christians in South Africa over the past 20 years or so. Below is a brief history of D.C.F. (Deaf Christian Fellowship): -

- 1973** ~ In July, a group of parents (5 concerned parents – all having a Deaf child in the family) met to plan a way for Deaf English speaking people of Protestant background to be evangelised. (The N.G. and Roman Catholic churches catered for the Deaf, but none of the English speaking Protestant churches did.)
- 1974** ~ Two Sunday schools in Blairgowrie, Johannesburg and Rosebank Union Church in Rosebank, Johannesburg were started for the Deaf children. These Sunday schools merged eventually joined in 1977 with approximately 8 pupils at Rosebank Union Church. Eventually young Deaf adults were trained to teach Sunday School. It is still in operation at Rosebank Union Church, supervised by a Deaf married couple.
- 1976** ~ It was realised that the teenage and adult Deaf were not being reached, so a Youth Group was started in a hall provided by Rosebank Union Church, although the work was independent of the Church.
- 1977** ~ Gradually contact was made with Deaf adults, who asked for a church service. From March a church service was held once a month also in a hall provided by Rosebank Union Church.
- 1978** ~ We became aware that we needed a more experienced person to help us establish a Fellowship. We had been in correspondence with Bert Barritt, a hearing man who had established the Evangelical Church of the Deaf in London. We invited him and his wife to visit South Africa.
- 1979** ~ Bert & Marie Barritt visited South Africa for 3 months. During their visit a number of Deaf received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Whilst the Barritts were here, we invited them to return for a period of 2 - 3 years to help us establish a Protestant work. The 1st Deaf Family Camp was held at Rabboni (23 - 25 February) – 40 deaf adults attended.
- 1980** ~ They returned in 1980 for a 3-year period. They concentrated on establishing a Fellowship in Johannesburg and Pretoria but also travelled to Cape Town and Durban. In Johannesburg Deaf Christian Fellowship (D.C.F.) came into being with 3 Deaf men, Michael Glanvill, Stephen Venter and William Warmington were trained and appointed as leaders. A small group in Durban was also established.
- 1984** ~ The Barritts returned for a 3-month visit. Also, a group of South Africans attended the 5th International Deaf Christian Conference, in Switzerland. William Warmington and Werner Zorn (both deaf), Olwen Venter, Gus & Coral van den Heuvel, and Fred Zondi from Natal (all hearing) went there. At the conference 18 countries were represented. This was described as a wonderful experience of "a slice of paradise on earth". An annual

Deaf Camp weekend once a year was started with Deaf people coming from all over South Africa, including the then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

1985 ~ Eventually “Hearing” stood back and Deaf leaders took over and moved to a hall at AFM Maranatha Park, Lyndhurst, Johannesburg. Here the Deaf were taught about and took part in: -

- Preaching
- Worship
- Baptism
- Counselling
- Bible Studies
- Prayer meetings
- Organising & running annual camps

1988 ~ 6th International Deaf Christian Conference in Wales – 9 Deaf, William & Bev Warmington, David & Estelle Mansell, Stephen Venter, David Loader, Michelle Prowling of Johannesburg and Adriaan & Marliene van Eck of Durban went there. A wonderful experience! 170 Deafies from 15 countries.

1989 ~ 10th Deaf Family Camp was held at Barachel, near Hartebeestepoort Dam, (10 - 12 March) – 97 Deafies attended. Bert Barritt from U.K. was our guest speaker.

1993 ~ God started to speak through His Word. “Break Camp” – Deuteronomy 1:6-8, “Cloud Moving”.

Prophecy: -

- To break isolation / segregation
- Would become like a stagnant pool / an oasis if they continued ‘walking around the mountain’
- Need to go and flow and be a living waterfall – this waterfall is that the Deaf would be benefiting lavishly from the ‘Hearing’ churches
- Go and be a blessing to “Hearing” people

Integrate into “Hearing Churches.” Each leader would take Deaf people into a church in their area. Approached churches about accepting Deaf into their community.

1994 ~ “Broke Camp”. D.C.F. was officially closed on Sunday, the 24th April 1994. It is only the end of the first step and the beginning of the second step in God's great plan for Deaf Christians. We are the "living stones", used by God to move in a new direction where the Gospel makes a more effective impact upon the lives of those who seek to know the love of God at these times of trouble in South Africa.

Since 1994 ~ Integrating into all relating NCMI (New Covenant Ministries International) churches with interpreted services: -

New Covenant Church, Bryanston: -

- Paulo & Inge Pinto (D), new leaders in full-time ministry to the Deaf at NCCB. About 15 young Deaf joined and over 120 Deaf visitors since 1994.
- Bronwynne Pringle moved to U.K. and has been very involved with Deaf Christian activities among the Deaf Community since 1999.
- Stanley Maloka moved to Fordsburg and is now new leader for a Deaf Coffee Bar Ministry since 2000.
- Riaan van Vuuren moved to New Zealand and successfully started the Deaf home cell group leader there at the beginning of 2001.

Cornerstone Church, Bedfordview: -

- William & Bev Warmington, leaders and about 16 Deaf joined from 1 May 1994. Additionally, new leaders, Anton (D) & Yannick (H) Nel. About 20 new converts were added to Cornerstone Church.

Covenant Life Church, Benoni: -

- David & Estelle Mansell, Deaf leaders and some 'evangelical' Deaf joined from May 1994. Later moved to **Break Thru Church** in 2002.
- A Deaf couple and leaders, Trevor & Anita Petersen moved to Auckland, New Zealand as missionaries in July 1996 after a prophecy by Ian McKellar (elder of NCCB) on 26 April 1995.
- Another Deaf couple and leaders, Charles & Shirley Visser moved to Cape Town to minister there in September 1997 – later both were ordained as Pastors for the Deaf Friends Church with over 35 Deaf joined from 2000 and another 4 new Deaf leaders were appointed.
- Yet further, couple and leaders, Luis (D) & Maria (H) Pombo, launched the **Deaf Coffee Bar Ministry** and later handed over to Phumie & Uriel Jerome in 2000 with over 40 Deaf joined from 1996 and another 5 Deaf co-leaders were appointed.

Other church not related to NCMI: -

- **Valley Vineyard Christian Fellowship**, Randburg: - about 10 Deaf attendants.
- **Living Waters Church (AFM)**, Nigel: - about 4 Deaf attendants.
- **Rhema Church North**, Randburg: - about 4 Deaf attendants.

2000 ~ On the 14th October 2000, a special celebration for the 20th Anniversary of DCF since the first establishment in 1980 was held at New Covenant Church Bryanston with over 60 Deaf from cities all over joining for fellowship and a braai (barbeque) for the afternoon.

(Recorded by William & Beverley Warmington (D) – Germiston, 2001)

Deafness

Deafness is a term used to cover the whole range of hearing loss. People who are deaf have the same range of intelligence and ability as other people, although the fulfilment of their potential may depend on the right type of support. The needs of the Deaf people will vary according to their degree of deafness.

Deaf people use a variety of methods of communication although many hard of hearing people prefer to use speech and lip-reading with the help of amplification i.e. hearing aids. However, those who have little or no useful hearing may use sign language as their first language and/or lip-reading.

Deafness may affect language and speech acquisition but this will vary according to a variety of factors including intelligence, age of onset, parental support, personality, and cultural and educational backgrounds.

People with hearing loss could be divided into two main groups: **Hard of Hearing** and **Deaf**.

I. Hard of Hearing (abbreviation 'HoH')

This term refers to a person with mild to moderate hearing loss whose primary mode of communication is the spoken language and who could in most circumstances benefit from the use of a hearing aid.

II. **Deaf** (abbreviation 'D', and 'H' for Hearing)

Deaf people can be divided into two subgroups depending on the time the hearing loss set in:

a) **Prelingual/congenital deafness (Deaf with a capital "D")**

This refers to a person who was born Deaf or became Deaf before the acquisition of the Language of the immediate family. Such a person has a moderate-severe to profound hearing loss, belongs to the Deaf culture and uses Sign Language as the prime mode of communication.

b) **Postlingual/Deafened**

This refers to a person who acquired moderately-severe to profound hearing loss after the acquisition of a spoken language and who is dependent upon the visual sense for additional information for the purposes of spoken communication.

Cause of Deafness

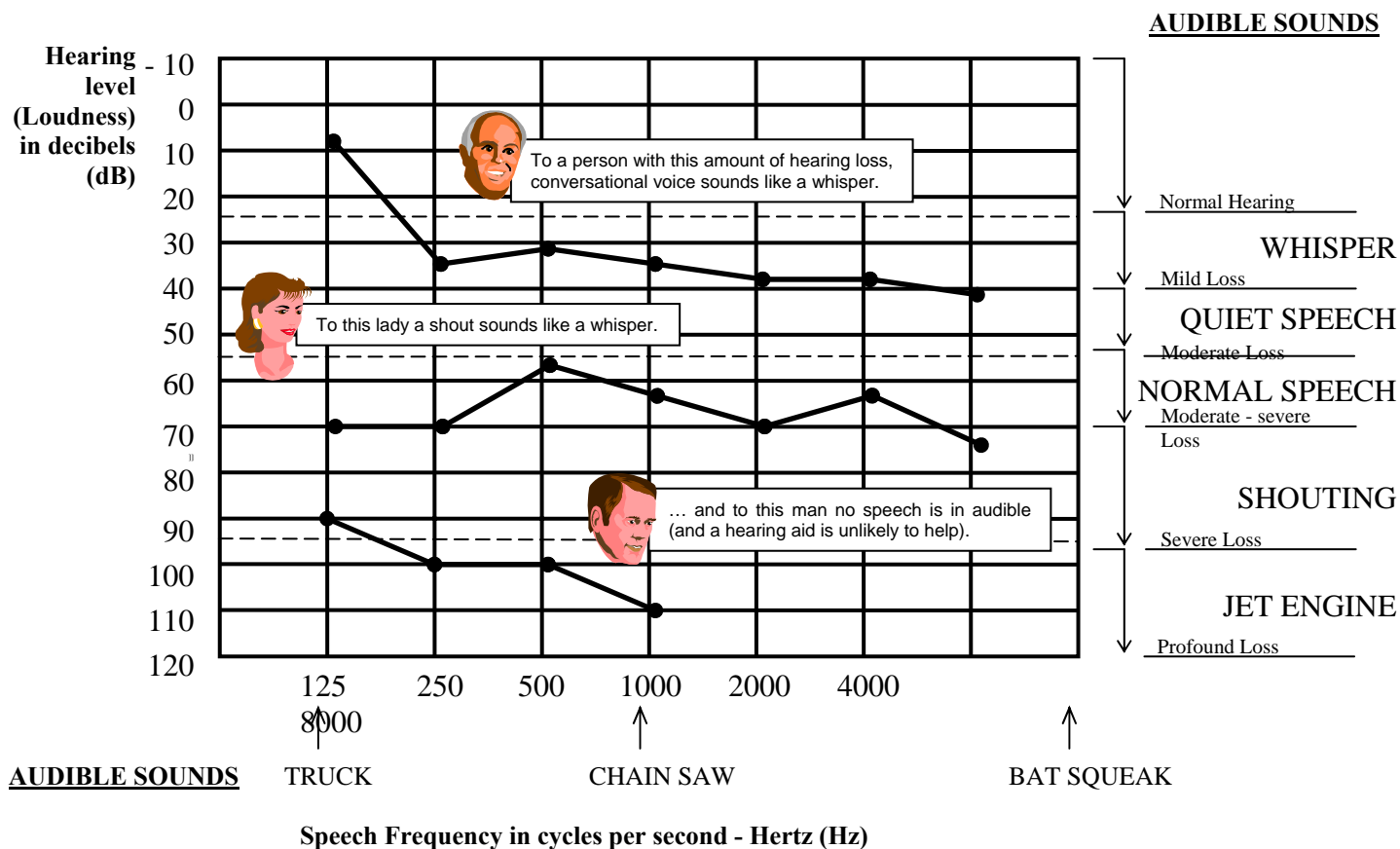
Permanent hearing loss happens when some part of the ear or nerve that carries sound to the brain is not working. There are many different reasons for this:

- a) Congenital (from birth) - Heredity (Deaf family), German Measles, Syndromes, and Cerebral Palsy (due to lack of adequate oxygen), or
- b) From early childhood such as meningitis, and after illnesses and accidents at any age.

Children with permanent deafness will need to be referred to a place where they can learn Sign Language, whereas hard of hearing will need hearing-aids at an early age and on-going training in speech therapy to acquire the skills to discriminate between the various sounds. However, the ability of spoken language would depend on their hearing loss.

All babies will learn whatever language they are exposed to from birth, so babies who are around people who use a fully visible language will learn it naturally in the same way as hearing children learn spoken (auditory) languages. **Therefore the only language that is fully visible is Sign Language.**

Below is a diagram that shows the audiological range to demonstrate the level of hearing loss.



People are often classified as having profound, severe, moderate-severe, moderate and mild hearing loss. These groups do not necessarily indicate how well the person with a hearing loss can communicate or understand speech.

Deaf/Prelingual People who have been deaf from birth or early childhood. They may never hear and speak normally. The majority may attend schools or units for the Deaf children and, as adults, their main method of communication may be South African Sign Language (SASL) or Exact English Sign Language (EESL). **Note that this training is specifically for this group of people.**

Deaf-Blind This dual sensory impairment is presented in many forms. The main ones are premature birth, birth trauma, rubella, and Usher syndrome (results in congenital deafness and gradual loss of sight in early childhood). 'Deaf-blind' does not usually mean totally deaf and totally blind. This term denotes a combination of visual and auditory impairments, which caused unique problems in communication, mobility, education, accessing information and understanding the surrounding world.

Deafened/Postlingual People who have lost their hearing, normally in adulthood, through either illness or accident. They have a normal education and speech but they rely mostly on lip-reading.

Hard of Hearing These are mostly older people who have gradually lost their hearing through the normal ageing process. More than half of them are unlikely to admit the problem and refuse to wear a hearing aid because they may tend to think of deafness as unacceptable socially. They may prefer to communicate in the hearing world but communication may still be difficult. They normally

communicate by speech or lip-reading, but also use hearing aids. However, some of them may have speech difficulties so they may use mostly Exact English Sign Language.

However, this suggested explanation is as follows: -

Profound Hearing Loss (over 96 dBHL)	Severe Hearing Loss (71 to 95 dBHL)	Moderate Hearing Loss (41 to 70 dBHL)	Mild Hearing Loss (25 to 40 dBHL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hearing aids may be little or no help. ● Most depend solely on lip-reading. ● Most use sign language if deaf from birth or early childhood. ● Almost all cannot use telephone (even with amplification). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hearing aids may be little help. ● Lip-reading skills would be important. ● Most use sign language if deaf from birth or early childhood. ● Most find it difficult to use a telephone (even with amplification). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many would have difficulty following speech without a hearing aid. But hearing aids are very beneficial. ● Lip-reading skills would be most useful. ● Some would prefer signing with speech. ● Most can be able to use telephone (with amplification). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some could have difficulty following speech, mainly in noisy backgrounds.
Deaf Deafened Deaf-blind / Usher Syndrome Other Syndrome e.g. Waardenburg's	Deaf Deafened Deaf-blind / Usher Syndrome Other Syndrome e.g. Waardenburg's	Partially Deaf Hard of Hearing (older people gradually lose hearing) Partially Deaf-blind / Usher Syndrome	Partially Deaf (born or early childhood) Hard of Hearing (older people gradually lose hearing) Hard of hearing-blind

Sign Language

Sign Language is **not universal or international**, as many people incorrectly believe. It is a naturally occurring language, which develops as a result of the need to communicate among members of Deaf communities, and is a language that occurs in the visual-gestural modality. It is produced using the hands, face, head, and upper torso and is processed by the eyes. In contrast, spoken languages are produced using the mouth, tongue and vocal chords and are processed by the ears. Sign Language is not linked to the spoken languages used in the country. They are all independent languages, in the same way as Russian is independent of Xhosa. Other Sign Languages are used in other parts of the world, for example Deaf people in North America use American Sign Language; while those in Namibia use Namibian Sign Language, etc.

Sign Language is an integral part and an identifying feature of membership to the Deaf Culture and has its own grammatical structure independent of any spoken/written language, e.g. English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, etc. It is the first language of the majority of Deaf children. However, South African Sign Language (SASL), despite regional difference and variations, has the same grammatical structure countrywide, and is not more or less abstract than any spoken language. It is capable of expressing with all its subtlety and complexity, and can be used to tell jokes, ask riddles, express sarcasm, tell lies, create idioms, make poetry, etc.

(Compiled by Paulo Pinto (D) – Johannesburg, 2000)

The 'Deaf Person' in a 'Hearing World'

What is it like to be deaf? People have asked me. Deaf? Oh, hmmm, how do I explain that? Simply, I can't hear.

No, it is much more than that. It is similar to a goldfish in a bowl. Always observing things going on. People talking all the times. It is like a man on his own island among the foreigners.

Isolation is no stranger to me. Relatives say hi and bye. But I sit for 5 hours among them. Taking great pleasure at amusing babies. Reading books, resting, helping out with food.

Natural curiosity perks up upon seeing great laughter, crying and upsetness. Inquiring only to meet with a "Never Mind", or "Oh, it's not important", getting a summarized statement of the whole story.

I'm supposed to smile to show my happiness. Little do they know how truly miserable I am. People are in control of language usage, I am at a loss and really uncomfortable!

Always feeling like an outsider among the hearing people even though it was not their intention.

Always assuming that I am part of them by my physical presence, not understanding the importance of communication.

Facing the choice between a Deaf Camping Weekend and a Family Reunion. Facing the choice between the Family commitment and

Deaf friends, I must make the choices constantly, any wonder why I choose Deaf friends???

I get such great pleasure at the Deaf Clubs, before I realize it, it is already 2 am, whereas I anxiously look at the clock every few minutes at the Family Reunion.

With Deaf people, I feel so normal, our communication flows back and forth, catching up with little travails, our daily life, our frustration in the bigger world, seeking the mutual understanding, contended smiles, and laughter are musical. So magical to me so attuned to each other's feelings. True happiness is so important.

I feel more at home with Deaf people of various colour, religion, short or tall, than I do among my own hearing relatives. And you wonder why? Our language is common. We understand each other.

Being at loss of control of the environment that is communication, people panic and retreat to avoidance, Deaf people are like the plague.

But Deaf people are still human beings with dreams, desires and needs to belong, just like everyone else.

"Deafness makes a culture, not Deaf people. Blindness makes a culture not blind people."

(Extracted from unknown Deaf author – USA, 2001)

Ministry To The Deaf

In order to understand the Deaf and their problems, i.e. problems of hearing loss and communication, we need to look at some facts concerning them.

Please Note: The term "**Deaf and Dumb**" which had been used quite commonly and also flagrantly in the past is now regarded by all Deaf people as derogatory and insulting. Those who disrespectfully label Deaf people as such, can find themselves in court and be fined or imprisoned. **Never** call a Deaf person 'deaf and dumb' or 'deaf-mute' or 'deaf and stupid'. Such hearing people who denigrate the Deaf people and refuse to try to understand and respect them should be termed '**hearing and DUMB**'.

Deaf people prefer to be regarded as *'Deaf'* (a term with capital 'D' to denote their pride as an individual) or hearing-impaired if they do retain some degree of residual hearing. The term *'deaf'* is to signify a medical term for those who have been born deaf or have lost their hearing through illness or trauma. The Deaf also regard themselves as a language minority group like those who are not English-speaking people because they do have a language of their own. Nowadays, the language of the Deaf is **Sign Language** no matter where they live in the world and it is now regarded as a language on its own. Like other languages (spoken), Sign Language is a language with its own structure, grammar, lexicon and vocabulary.

Sign Language is based on the language that is spoken and used by the hearing people in their country, for example, our Sign Language is based on English by using its grammar and vocabulary but it has a different structure and grammar from the actual English Language. Sign Language is **not** universal but unique and varies from place to place, region to region and country to country. It is NOT a system of gestures but carries own meanings in manual, non-manual and multi-channel signs. Whereas hearing people convey their feelings and emotions through intonations and inflections of speech, the Deaf use facial expressions and body language to convey their feelings and emotions.

Introduction

People BORN Deaf are congenitally deaf, NOT deaf and dumb since they would be taught speech and lip-reading later in their lives. They are also termed prelingually deaf because they have not yet acquired language. Those who are NOT born deaf or who have lost their hearing after birth through illness or trauma are postlingually deaf because they have already acquired some form of language. Deafness is a silent handicap because unlike other handicapped people, it is not recognised until you meet a Deaf person. One may often be taken aback by his/her blank expression and strange vocal tones. Deaf people are a people on their own and they live in a world of their own. It is much smaller but not separate from the hearing world. Other groups of people with various kinds of physical handicaps can easily integrate with hearing people and that because of one factor: **THE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.**

Communication

Deaf people may have communication problems either from birth or as a result of early loss of hearing in their young lives. But it is not true that their minds are also affected intellectually or mentally since through proper education and effective means of communication they can develop their intellect and are able to communicate by various means, e.g. slow speech, writing, signing, with their hearing peers. It is a proven fact that intelligent people, including Deaf people, can develop only by means of communication. *Everything that's going on in this world, is spread by the means of communication. This is a true fact, but the Deaf are not at all deprived of this by any means.* Take communication away and everything "dies", that is, it is doomed to deadly silence. This is because communication stands for activity, while silence is like living in a cubicle without sound. One is caught up in a world of your own and unless you burst through the barrier of silence by means of proper communication, you'll find yourself very isolated in your contact with the world around you.

Due to the fact that the Deaf cannot hear or speak, their "only" contact with the world around them is **by means of sight**. In other words, **their eyes are their ears**. This brings about the following important facts:

- a. They are dependent on lip-reading and are only able to follow a speaker if he/she speaks slowly, clearly and uses simple and easy-to-understand words. This can be done if one communicates by using simple signs (not gestures). Even if he/she does not know sign

language and just uses simple everyday signs like eat, sleep, walk, etc. communication is possible. There are charts available for hearing people to learn such signs.

- b. Most Deaf people are slow to understand so it helps if you can repeat yourself as often as possible if necessary. You still have to make sure that they understand you correctly otherwise misunderstandings may occur. The perception that your having to repeat yourself often, or having to explain over and over again is because they don't want to understand or have an inability to think or reason abstractly and logically is nonsense. Most Deaf people are capable of understanding exactly what is going on in the world if they have audio-visual aids. Deaf people need at least three things in order to understand and remember what they have 'heard' or learned:
 - i a written and spoken word
 - ii a picture of that word
 - iii a sign in their own language

Once they are able to "see" something in an understandable way and through a means that they can relate to, they will have no difficulty with communication.

Deaf people need support and camaraderie; they need to bounce ideas off people, without communication we lose a sense of 'peerness'.

Interpreting for the Deaf

Sign Language interpreters are to Deaf people what the white stick is to the blind, and the wheel chair and crutches are to the physically disabled. Through the church, people can be encouraged to attend signing classes and in this way gain knowledge and understanding of the Deaf community within and without the church.

There is a constant need for more interpreted worship services. Beyond serving our own members there is a vast (365 million) number of unchurched people in the world that potentially could benefit from interpreted instructions, Bible classes, worship services, and etc. Nowadays in this country, there are very few qualified interpreters. It is very difficult to find an interpreter at any time and needs to be arranged well in advance. It is expensive to hire interpreters when you can find one. At least two interpreters are needed for any event/meeting period lasting more than one hour at a time.

It is not always possible to interpret for the Deaf at the same speed that a hearing speaker is speaking and/or to try to interpret each and every word. However, nowadays there are few fluently skilled interpreters who are able to interpret at the same pace as the hearing speaker. Such interpreters have to receive three years or more training in colleges and in services to the Deaf.

Without such interpreters, if a speaker has spoken on the Name of Jesus and right after the service asks the Deaf person a question like: "What did he talk about?" They would say: "About the Name of Jesus." This is correct, but if you were to then ask them to tell you in detail what they 'heard' about the Name of Jesus, most of them will not be able to answer that question. They would say that the words flew past their eyes and ears. Often this is because the speaker or organisers have been thoughtless as to not provide them with an adequate interpreter.

It is nonsense to say that it would be good not to have the Deaf in the same services as hearing people, as it would be a waste of time. Even if the Deaf do like to sit in a hearing service, they would not benefit personally if there were NO sign language interpreter available at any service!

In order to know how to apply the truth personally, we need to know what causes the Deaf to want to sit in a hearing service if there is communication they can see. For example, overhead projectors, subtitled videotapes AND sign language interpreters on the screen. Sometimes the Deaf like to

have a place of their own where they can have sermons or religious talks in their own language in a way they can understand. When you minister to the Deaf and other hearing impaired persons, you need to allow them to ask questions when they arise and the speaker must be able to answer/question them. Also, when ministering to them, you need to use a lot of body language and facial expressions. Any message directed towards them, must not only come from the mouth (spoken word), the hands (the sign language) or audio-visual aids (written words and pictures) but also through your body through expressions of what is being said.

In South Africa, there are over 12 different languages, and as a result there are several different sign languages. The sign language of each group of Deaf from different races, for example, English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, etc. all differ from each other. The only means of communication is a basic understanding of their sign language, not by lip-reading!

Among Deaf people themselves, everyone is on a different intellectual level. With some people you can talk more freely than with others, in who's case you need to use simple words and signs. Usually when a hearing person meets a Deaf person for the first time, it would be good to ask some questions and then let him/her respond and talk for a while in order to determine on what intellectual level he/she is. Then he/she can adjust to his level of communication so that they can converse on the Deaf person's level.

All this asks for is plenty of patience. One must be willing to sit with Deaf people even for hours and hours if necessary and just love them. Right here is a golden opportunity to develop some of the fruit of the Spirit, especially the fruit of patience and long-suffering.

Understanding the Culture of the Deaf Person

For years, the Deaf culture has been suppressed by hearing people who regard it as an alien, outwardly ridiculous culture without any meaningful means of communication.

But now Deaf culture has asserted itself as a vital-expression and rich in language, and as an independent culture on an equal footing to any hearing culture. It is as distinctive and energetic as the English culture or for that matter any other hearing culture.

Therefore, it would be wrong for hearing people to try and force the Deaf to change or alter their culture to suit the perception of culture of hearing people. For example, the hearing person thinks that Christianity should be brought to or forced upon the Deaf people without their prior knowledge or understanding of what is being imparted to them. No hearing person should expect a Deaf person to change their culture itself but to rather bring the Deaf person to the knowledge of Christ and into the kingdom of God. Allow them to understand that this is the best solution for their culture just as it is for every other culture in the world.

Hurting Deaf People

Deaf people are a 'forgotten mission field' or 'neglected mission field', and often are stigmatised by society – and even by the church. They are vulnerable and, therefore, we are using Spirit-led sensitivity to reach them. **Deaf are normal people too; treat them as such.**

Due to the fact that the Deaf cannot communicate properly, hearing people consider them to be stupid and even mentally unstable if they cannot answer back properly when questioned. Some hearing people think that because the Deaf's (and Dumb) ears are closed, their minds must be too! This is far from the truth. If it were so, then the Deaf may consider the hearing people who are unable to understand, or communicate with them, Dumber!

Furthermore, hearing people often consider it a waste of time to communicate with the Deaf because they do not know how to communicate with them. This also leads to the following result: Hearing people are afraid to give the Deaf chances to prove themselves. **This attitude and approach hurts the Deaf so deeply that it causes them to withdraw and close themselves up.**

In order to minister effectively to Deaf people, one needs to win their trust and this is only possible through unconditional love and patience. Also, very important is the ability to understand them. This means you must be able to identify with them and relate to them. Hearing people can learn anything and as much as they want to about the Deaf, **but unless they experience for themselves what it is like to be Deaf, they will never be able to identify with, relate to, think, reason and feel like a Deaf person.** They can still give advice, **but the Deaf will not know how to apply this advice personally unless the advice can be spoken clearly with signs and facial expressions, thereby enabling them to understand.**

The only people who are qualified enough to minister effectively to them are the Deaf themselves. But they must be trained on an equal basis to hearing people. There may be some hearing people who can do this **if they have been trained properly in Deaf ways of life, sign language and culture.**

Education by Parents and School

Very few parents know how to bring up a Deaf child properly and effectively. The Deaf child is either spoiled, neglected or over-protected, all of which are dangerous and unfair to them. **The least a hearing parent/teacher can do is to learn Sign Language with which he/she is able to talk to the Deaf child.** Ask God for love, patience, understanding and wisdom. How the Deaf child will turn out in life, is determined by the kind of education they receive during their school years. **If a Deaf child is brought up properly, then he/she has a great chance to lead a normal life, just like a hearing child. Deaf people can do anything that hearing people can do except HEAR.**

'Knowing' the Deaf Person

Having a Deaf person as an acquaintance, colleague or friend means nothing **unless** you have developed a relationship and at the same time made all effort to understand their 'culture' and a decision to accept them as 'normal' human beings.

Many Charismatics and Pentecostals often pose a significant barrier to winning converts among the Deaf community. While much of the evidence is anecdotal, many people, particular those in developing countries, view the Deaf as needing healing, thus emphasis creates a harmful, **paternalistic view.** The Deaf should be treated with dignity and allowed full participation in church life instead of focusing on their physical condition. The Deaf have developed cultural strategies which form part of the deepest level of the formation of the individual's personality and self-identity, hence to 'heal' their deafness would affect them on the deepest level of identity and would be detrimental to those who were either born deaf or became deaf at an early age. Recently a survey indicated that **90 percent (%) of the Deaf did not want to be healed,** nevertheless to assert that treating their condition as a handicap keeps many from converting to Christianity and points out that religion is not considered a part of Deaf culture or heritage. In many years the Deaf have been looked upon as disabled people in the same way (others) view the blind, crippled and mentally retarded; when being approached in this manner, the Deaf have been unresponsive to the Gospel.

Ministering to the Deaf

Ministry to the Deaf is NOT the same as ministering to hearing people. You can minister to many hearing people at once, but ministering to the Deaf often requires a person-to-person encounter. It is possible at times for bigger group training, however, this is only effective with good interpreters and interaction.

Secondly, there is the **geographical problem**. Most Deaf people live far-spread and one has to “search” for them. This is because no communication aids like radio/telephone/television can be used to contact them. Although most contacts are made through personal visitations, Deaf people can be reached nowadays by means of fax, computer (Internet) and cell-phone (sms – short message service). Otherwise, hearing people who know Deaf people or live close to them can help to follow them up by providing them with addresses. The Deaf themselves should be given the addresses of hearing people so that they too can be encouraged to visit. **All this take times and finance.** The best means, in my opinion, to solve this problem, **is the use of subtitled or captioned videotapes and DVD discs.** All that is needed is to contact some hearing Christians in a particular area (especially those who are genuinely interested in Deaf people). They can be trained spiritually and then used as a contact in that area by providing them with ‘user-friendly’ materials such as videos, DVD discs or visual-aid manuals. These they can show to others by running a Deaf "cell-meeting" in their homes.

When ministering to the Deaf, it is not only a matter of conveying spiritual truths to them, but also a matter of explaining to them. One must keep in mind that apart from the necessity of understanding the spiritual truths, **the Deaf must be able to understand the words of the particular language that is being used.** That is why it is so important to be simple and effective in the presentation of any message to them. They need to understand the speaker correctly as well as what the exact meaning is of the words being used. **Last of all, hearing people have NO right to impose on the Deaf, methods that they think will work for them. What has worked for hearing people will not necessarily work for the Deaf because of their different needs. Hearing people need to consider first the needs of Deaf people before they try to adjust methods according to their impression of what may work.**

*(Written by unknown Hearing person, 1970's,
amended and restructured by Dr. Robert Simmons (D) and Paulo Pinto (D) – Johannesburg, June 2002)*

Visual Distractions To Deaf

1. Noise, mirrors, lights, candles on table
2. Dark sunglasses
3. Print, plaid, polka-dot
4. Bright or frosted nail polish
5. Long fingernails
6. Jewelry except wedding rings and watches
7. Lip-read (moustaches, beards or cigarette in mouth etc.)

Ten Points To Remember When Talking To Deaf People

There are many degrees of deafness, from partial hearing loss to profound deafness. We've prepared these guidelines for you to follow when dealing with anyone with hearing problems.

1. First of all you must get their attention. A gentle touch on the Deaf person's arm or shoulder is the best way to show that you want to say something.
2. Eye contact is extremely important to Deaf people, when you are speaking, do not turn away.
3. Never stand with your back to a window or bright lights – this means your face will be in the shade and difficult to lip-read. Make sure there are sufficient lights on – no candlelight!
4. When speaking to the Deaf person, try to keep your hands away from your mouth, never talk with a pen, pencil, and cigarette in your mouth and also never shout; it distorts words. When speaking use your mouth clearly without over-emphasising.
5. Deaf people would appreciate it if you speak slowly, but not so slowly as to disrupt the natural rhythm of the sentence.
6. It may be helpful to use pen and paper to communicate. Have piece of paper and pen ready to jot down words.
7. As everything may be new to you, try to be patient. Try to keep to one subject in conversation and in sentences not odd words. Give some warning if you are going to switch. It is difficult for a person lip-reading to jump from football to summer holidays.
8. If you can see that you have been misunderstood, say the same thing again, only rephrased, e.g. "Haven't you finished your work yet?" rephrased to "Have you finished your work?" (This is easier to lip-read.) If you do not understand the first time, ask the Deaf person to repeat it.
9. If you are going to spend a long time with a Deaf person wear simple clothes; bright jazzy clothes distract the deaf person and make it hard to concentrate.
10. Only use sign language if you know the Deaf person uses it. However, do not leave out your own normal gestures and expressions when you talk. It is helpful to use hand gestures e.g. a wave to mean "**Goodbye**" and a thumbs up for "**Are you well?**" Even if you have not yet mastered sign language, try and communicate where you can. Try any method to overcome difficulties.

How Can Churches Become Deaf-Friendly?

By Prayer: -

- Ask God to give Church members a love for Deaf people
- Ask God to prepare Church members to be aware of the needs of Deaf people
- Ask God to make people aware that Deaf people have a lot to give
- Ask God to help people to be accommodating of Deaf people
- Ask God to remind the Church about Deaf people in their evangelism
- Ask God to remind the Church that we are all one in Christ

Getting Involved: -

- As Deaf people are very observant, try to show that you want to be friends. Deaf people appreciate friendship as much as the next person
- Even if you have not yet mastered sign language, try and communicate where you can. Try any method to overcome difficulties
- After a time you may feel that communication has improved dramatically and you can start thinking about taking up evening classes to learn basic sign language. It may be a good idea to get some people from your Church to attend

(Extracted from Hands Together Newsletter, Kenneth Nuttall (D) – England, 2000)

Insight Into Deafness

*Deafness, however great or small, is a cage of loneliness.
A feeling of sadness, of being left out, – unknown to others.
It's a language all of its own unique in its garbled sounds.*

*Hearing is like a distorted radio or a tape playing backwards in a cassette recorder.
It's a hurt feeling when everyone laughed at the joke except you.
Deafness is weeping, crying in frustration to understand a voice;
And straining to see the lips move – the interpreter to ears.
Deafness is exhaustion from intense listening. It's a battle from beginning to end.
A struggle that is not noticed – because there is nothing to see.*

(By courtesy of Miss Barbara Head (D) – Sanderstead, England, 2000)

Myths about Deaf People and its Deafness & Language

To challenge the Hearing public to rethink the stereotypes it has about people who are Deaf.

Referring to Deaf people as 'Deaf and Dumb' is a hurtful falsehood. True, many Deaf people cannot use spoken language to communicate, but this makes them neither stupid nor mute. Deaf people simply use a different language – Sign Language – which is a sophisticated system of hand-signed and non-verbal codes.

Sign language has no connection with any written or spoken language; its grammar is completely different from that of the spoken word, yet it contains all the elements of a language and is now officially recognised as such.

Just like any other first language, it provides a basic framework for the learning of a spoken or written language. Without it, it is more difficult for a Deaf person to learn speech.

Other hurtful myths include the idea that Sign Language is derived from primitive signs used by the Bushmen, for instance, or even ape species! Or that it is simply mimicry.

Another opinion is that using Sign Language interferes with the ability to acquire spoken language. In fact, the opposite is true.

(Extracted from Deafsa's brochure on 'Deaf' – Johannesburg, 1999)

All Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are good speech-readers.

Many factors are involved in the success of speech-reading. People with a hearing loss are not inherently better speech-readers.

There is just one Sign Language for all countries.

Just as there is no one spoken language for all countries, there is not one, universal Sign Language. There are more than 100 Sign Language used in the world today. Every Sign Language reflects its own history, culture and social values, and regional variations.

Deaf Math: Limited Communication + Limited Education = Limited Opportunity.

Deaf Math: Education + Deafness = Unlimited Potential.

Deaf people are visually sharper than hearing people.

That a Deaf persons sight magically strengthens to compensate for not hearing is a common misconception. But Deaf people do use their eyes as hearing people their ears. Deaf people learn to rely on visual cues, and may do become more alert about taking in and processing visual messages. Paying close attention is a survival skill for many people with a hearing loss.

People with hearing loss always talk louder.

No not all do. If they cannot hear the loudness of their own voice, they might speak louder. People with conductive hearing loss, however, actually speak often because their voice sounds loud to them in their head.

Deaf people can't talk.

Most Deaf people's vocal apparatus is perfectly normal. Some have acquired speech, others have not. Some Deaf people prefer to use their voices, while others don't.

Deaf people can't drive.

Not only can Deaf people drive, but also statistics show that, per capita, Deaf drivers have fewer accidents. This is largely because driving is a visual skill. Hearing drivers routinely mask outside noises and auditory clues by closing their windows, playing radios, CD players and cassette decks, or using cellular phones.

All Deaf people use sign language.

Culturally Deaf people use sign language. Many people with a hearing loss do not know sign language.

Hearing aids completely correct hearing loss.

Hearing aids are assistive devices that improve hearing for some individuals. Unlike glasses that can restore 20/20 vision, hearing aids do not restore or correct hearing. Hearing aid may enable a person to hear someone's voice, even though she/he may not be able to understand distinct words. Just because someone wears a hearing aids does not mean the person hears normally.

Parents lose their Deaf children to the Deaf community.

Deaf people who enjoyed a close rapport and good communication, signing or oral, with their parents while growing up tend to remain close to them for the rest of their lives.

My child will be limited because of his/her deafness.

Do not consider your child as sick. He/she is as normal as any other child; then only difference is that he/she cannot hear.

All hearing losses are the same.

The single term "hearing loss" covers a wide range of losses that have very different effects on a person's ability to process sound and, therefore, to understand speech.

Deaf people are not sensitive to noise.

Some types of hearing loss actually accentuate sensitivity to noise. Loud sounds become garbled and uncomfortable. Hearing aid users often find loud sounds, which are greatly magnified by their aids, very unpleasant.

When someone has a hearing loss, that just means that sounds are not loud enough.

That's just part of it. Perhaps that person may have trouble hearing in crowds or in group conversations. Perhaps they hear but don't always understand what's being said; for them words may seem mumbled or just run together.

Deaf people do not enjoy music.

Music is considered a universal language because it communicates across all language barriers. Many Deaf people can, and do, enjoy music. It has long been known that children, Hearing or Deaf, benefit from being exposed to music. Depending on the level of hearing loss, many Deaf children are able to pick up the rhythm of music through sound vibration and thus can learn to recognize the elements of pitch, duration, intensity and timbre. Examples of Deaf musicians are

Evelyn Glennie, a world-renowned percussionist, and Paul Whittaker, who graduated in music from Oxford University. He actively supports the right for children to have access to music.

Deaf Math: Speech Skills + Zero Education ≠ (unequal to) Jobs.

Deaf Math: Literacy Skills + Self-identity = Jobs.

Wearing a hearing aid is a sign you're getting old.

Although hearing loss is common in older adults, many middle-aged and younger people are affected as well. There are many determining factors beyond just age.

If a Deaf child learns to sign first, she will not learn to use her voice.

It must be remembered that each child is unique, with his/her own set of skills. Studies have shown that sign language does not have a negative impact on the ability to speak. The ability to communicate successfully at an early age, in any mode, increases the child's capacity to acquire other languages. Children will learn the advantages of speech if they receive positive feedback when using their voice. Clarity of speech is influenced by how well a child can use their residual hearing.

Only a few people have a hearing loss and chances are, I will not be affected.

The odds are that you or someone close to you has some degree of hearing loss. In fact, it has been estimated that one in ten people experience some degree of hearing loss.

(By "Deaf Affairs" from the Internet)