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We CAN Communicate

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We CAN Communicate

A seminar on deaf culture and sign language in the church setting

by

Bob Alcorn and Jan Kanda

Produced by Deaf Missions, RR 2, Box 26, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501
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Dear Friend,

It makes no difference how good our intentions or information are, if we cannot communicate them. That seems to be one of the greatest—if not the greatest—problem we have in our relationships and ministries. The communication problems are multiplied when we cross cultures. Since deaf ministry is a cross-cultural situation for most of us, it is only natural to assume that we are going to have communication problems—not only in relating the Good News about Jesus Christ, but in relating to one another.

At Deaf Missions we are very aware of the "communication gap" between hearing and deaf people, so late last spring (June/87) we invited two experts in the fields of deaf culture and American Sign Language, Bob Alcorn and Jan Kanda, to come to Council Bluffs and share some of their poignant perspectives and insights on deaf culture. What resulted from their visit was an enlightening (sometimes shocking!), inspiring, and challenging, one-day seminar causing everyone in attendance to take a second look at their attitudes about deafness and deaf culture.

I am excited about these tapes! If you are interested in deaf culture or ministry among deaf people, I am sure that you will be, too. The response we had from the We CAN Communicate seminar attendees was tremendous. One of the comments that I repeatedly heard regarding the seminar was, "I never thought about that before." Whether you agree or disagree with what is said, I guarantee that you will benefit from Bob and Jan's heartfelt presentation.

I hope the We CAN Communicate seminar videotapes help you grow in your ministry with deaf people and in your awareness of deaf culture. We at Deaf Missions are glad that we can share the experience with you.

Sincerely,

Signature Deleted

Joel Burkum
Producer

P.S. The ideas and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Deaf Missions' staff, board, or supporters. We welcome your comments and suggestions.
INSTRUCTIONS

How to Use the Videotapes for Your Seminar

1. Leader should view tapes beforehand so he/she knows what to expect.

2. Use a television set with a large enough screen to accommodate your audience.

3. Adjust the height and placement of the television set for optimum viewing.

4. Prior to each showing, be sure equipment is set up and working properly. (Note: If video picture has a fuzzy, horizontal, white strip running through it, adjust the "tracking" control on your VCR.)

5. Photocopy desired portions from this booklet to hand out to your audience. Distribute copies to seminar participants before each respective session.

6. Properly introduce each session. Begin with some thought questions to stimulate the group's thinking before the tape is shown.

7. If more than one session is shown in one day, allow at least 10 to 15 minutes for breaks between sessions. This is an ideal time for informal discussion about the subject matter.

8. Store tapes in a vertical position to avoid tape injury. Rewind tapes for extended storage. Store tapes in their case, in a cool, dust-free area.

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TOPICS

We CAN Communicate

Tape 1
SESSION 1
Understanding Values and Characteristics of Deaf Culture (Part 1)

SESSION 2
Understanding Values and Characteristics of Deaf Culture (Part 2)

Tape 2
SESSION 3
Questions and Answers about Deaf Culture and Deaf Ministry

SESSION 4
Tips for Interpreters and Churches Interested in Deaf Ministry

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A WORKING MODEL
BY
BETTY M. COLONOMOS 1980
Explanation of the Colonomos Model
by Bob Alcorn and Jan Kanda

SOURCE LANGUAGE: The language used to express the (original) incoming message—can be English or ASL.

MESSAGE: The "meat" or "heart" of what is being communicated—different from the rest of the box labeled SOURCE LANGUAGE in that the real message may be different from the words/signs. (Example: "I'm fine" said with NVC and vocal/sign intonation sometimes means "I'm fine"; other times means "not-so-hot," "so-so," "fantastic," "couldn't be better," etc.).

RECEPTIVE MODE: The physical channel through which the message must pass in order to be perceived by the interpreter. If the source language is English, the receptive mode is auditory; if the source language is ASL, the receptive mode is visual. The interpreter must have good hearing/vision in order to perceive the incoming message. A severe physical impairment, or temporary environmental condition (static in microphone, noisy equipment near room, smoke-filled room, etc) can prevent clear perception of source language statement causing the process to break down.

ACTIVE SHORT-TERM MEMORY: Temporary storage area for incoming message which allows interpreter to "hold" incoming information until there is a "chunk"—enough to make sense and begin analysis—or to hold incoming information while previously received chunk is being analyzed, recomposed, and produced. Interpreters must develop both auditory and visual short-term memory.

PASSIVE LONG-TERM MEMORY: Storage area for life-long experiences and all previously learned information—cultural, linguistic, general, and technical. If the interpreter receives something that doesn't immediately "click," s/he may have to do a long-term memory search (i.e., What does that word mean? Is there an equivalent term/sign for that idea/concept? etc.). Also used during analysis of source language meaning (as distinct from message meaning). Not everything goes through the long term memory...only those things which need assistance (additional input) before they can be analyzed.

ANALYSIS: This is the most important area of the model. If a message is not understood, it cannot be analyzed. If it can't be analyzed, it CANNOT be interpreted!!! There are five areas to be analyzed:

1. CONTENT: What is s/he really saying?
2. CONTEXT: Who is present? What is the purpose of this meeting? What is the speaker's purpose/goal? Where are we? Why are these people here? How are they attempting to communicate to each other? What are the cultural orientations of the speaker and the audience? What norms are in effect for this context? Does what I'm
seeing follow or violate those norms and why?

3. **AFFECT:** What feelings are present either openly stated or implied through word/sign selection, tone of voice/modulation of sign, etc. Why is that affect present? How does it relate to the language/message?

4. **STYLE:** This refers to the speaker's individual speaking type, personality, style of presentation. Analysis of this will allow the interpreter to look like/sound like (i.e., become) the speaker.

5. **REGISTER:** The way in which a speaker's words, phrases, sentence structure, and rule taking behaviors mark "distance" between participants in the event. This is often reflective of the status difference prescribed by the context. There are five levels of register:

   a. **frozen:** Don't change in form, static (Examples: Pledge to the Flag, fraternity membership oath, etc.). Meaning is in the ritual more than in the words themselves.

   b. **formal:** Usually marked by psychological distance between speaker and audience, no interaction—uni-directional communication: slower pace of presentation to allow for clarity of enunciation and presentation of ideas in speech; high-level/educated word selection (Examples: President's State of the Union Address, Welcoming Remarks at Democratic convention, sermon by pastor on Sunday morning, etc.).

   c. **consultative:** Increased level of interaction between individuals yet an obvious "professional distance"; turn taking requires the one of greater status to recognize or yield the floor (Examples: doctor to patient, lawyer to client, teacher to class).

   d. **informal:** Equal amount of participation between people involved and tend to be of equal status at least in the setting where interchange is taking place; turn taking allows for interruptions, talking over one another, rapid shift of topic (Examples: friend to friend, student to student, coworker to coworker, etc.).

   e. **Intimate:** Present in interchange between individuals who have a close personal relationship and "history," marked not only in the casual, intimate selection of words/signs but also in the fact that the two need not explain the background of the statement to each other—almost as if one knows the other so well they can predict what will be said before it is said or one can make a one word reference to an event and the other already knows everything about that place/event/person so they can jump directly to the comment that is to be made. One person might say, "You know I was thinking..." and the other says, "Yea, I agree. How about tomorrow?" A "non-intimate" looking on would still not know what the two are talking about, but the "intimates" understand each other perfectly (Examples: husband and wife, very close friends).
MESSAGE: The result of analyzing all of the above; having a sense of what was really intended, how it was said, the feelings involved, the impact desires, etc. The interpreter has discarded all source language form (words/signs) and, as if having climbed into the speaker/signer's head, has the unclothed, "raw" or "naked" idea/intent.

ACTIVE SHORT-TERM MEMORY: This is the area where the message is stored while pulling additional information from PASSIVE LONG-TERM MEMORY, or while waiting for additional parts of the MESSAGE to come through the process so that one may COMPOSE the message mentally in the TARGET LANGUAGE.

PASSIVE LONG-TERM MEMORY: Storage of all accumulated experiences and knowledge/information learned in the target language—vocabulary, culture, general experience, general knowledge. This will be accessed if something in the MESSAGE enters the ACTIVE SHORT-TERM MEMORY but does not compute (Examples: What is the word/sign for that?; What is the cultural equivalent for that in target culture?, etc.).

COMPOSITION: The mental rehearsal of what will be produced in TARGET LANGUAGE; a brief mental check to see if what one has come up with will work. If the interpreter feels it will, the composed message moved to TARGET LANGUAGE; if not, the interpreter may have to conduct further LONG-TERM MEMORY search, or pull additional input from the SHORT-TERM MEMORY bank.

TARGET LANGUAGE: The actual act of producing the utterance received into the target language (English/ASL). This should be equivalent to the source language utterance in every way.

MESSAGE: The "meat" or "heart" of what is said—the intent of what is being expressed. This should be identical/equivalent to the MESSAGE within the SOURCE LANGUAGE box.

MONITOR: This is the internal monitoring system wherein the interpreter monitors reactions, physical conditions, and process management. An error may be detected, or, once uttered, there may be a sense that what was uttered doesn't work. If so, that chunk is sent back to the COMPOSITION area for correction.

FEEDBACK: This is the external monitoring system based on audience feedback. If the interpreter is getting feedback that indicates understanding is taking place or that the target language utterances are "legible," no action is necessary. However, if the audience gives feedback to indicate lack of clarity due to interpreter performance—not to ambiguity or lack of clarity within source language utterance—that chunk(s) is fed back to the composition area for correction.
BOOKS

Recommended Reading on Deafness

*When the Mind Hears.* Harlan Lane. Random House.

*In This Sign.* Joanne Greenberg. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.


*The Other Side of Silence.* Arden Neisser. Gallaudet University Press


*Can’t Your Child Hear?* Roger Freeman, Clifton Carbin, and Robert Boese. Pro-ed.


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The Bible: American Sign Language Translation

Deaf Missions is excited to be able to offer you an important tool for ministry with deaf people—The Bible: American Sign Language Translation. This is the first translation of its kind in ASL. Produced on videotape using skilled signers, this unique version of the Bible makes the Word of God come alive for people whose first language is American Sign Language. At present, about one-third of the New Testament and a small portion of the Old Testament have been translated. See the enclosed list of completed sections. Each videotape is approximately one hour in length.

These videotapes may be purchased directly, or through the OMEGA Bible Tape Club. Tape club members may purchase videotapes at a reduced price. If you do not wish to purchase the videotapes, you may borrow them at no cost from our library. The library is provided and maintained by the gifts of Christian people.

If you have questions about The OMEGA PROJECT (The Bible: ASL Translation), would like to order a sample tape, or are interested in becoming a tape club member, please write to: Deaf Missions, RR 2, Box 26, Council Bluffs, IA 51501, or phone us at 712-322-5493 (Voice/TTY). We will be happy to serve you in any way we can.

Living Lessons from the Bible

Living Lessons from the Bible is Deaf Missions' latest Bible study resource for deaf ministries! Living Lessons are regular, weekly Bible study materials which include video lessons (15 to 20 minutes in length) and companion printed study guide booklets. To begin receiving Living Lessons on a regular basis, simply contact Deaf Missions for details. Lessons are geared toward junior high schoolers and above. There is no cost for using Living Lessons from the Bible (free-will offering requested). This new program is ideal for worship, and small-group or individual Bible study. It is especially helpful for churches just beginning ministries for the deaf.

If you would like further information and a sample tape to preview, please write to Deaf Missions at the above address.

Daily Devotions for the Deaf

Daily Devotions for the Deaf is a printed devotional Bible study guide prepared especially for deaf Christians. Each brief daily devotional thought is accompanied by a Bible text, an illustration, and a prayer. This easy-to-understand guide is a favorite of both new and mature Christians. There is no subscription fee for Daily Devotions for the Deaf, but free-will offerings are requested (Booklets may be purchased in bulk quantities—3 or more copies to one address—for $.60 each.).

Daily Devotions for the Deaf is also available in large (sight-saving) print for those who need it.

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